flavoring is anise, causes the liquid to become milky in colour. A necessary accompaniment is the mezza (from a Greek word, universal with the liquor) which consists of a large variety of small dishes to be eaten while drinking, ranging from nuts and cucumbers to cold chicken and grilled meat. The red wine of the Nestorians is not used by the officials and officers. Most of them, as a concession to Islam, foreswear intoxicants during Ramadan, but the remaining months of the year offer no such obstacle. These gatherings, of which gambling is the prominent diversion, will be met again.

In the household the service of food depends for its character on whether or not guests are present. If members of the family are alone, they eat together, men, women and children, seated on the floor, or, in a few cases, at a table. The place of eating varies somewhat, and can be the kitchen itself, a neighboring sleeping-room, the diwankhana, or the courtyard. The food is served in large dishes by the women and these are placed in the center of the gathering. Often silverware and plates are used, and otherwise, only the fingers and a piece of bread. There appears to be little correspondence with social status among the wealthy in this matter, although the poor always eat with their hands. The head of the house takes the first bite, saying as he does so, bismillah, "in the name of God," and others follow him. The servants have their meal after the family is finished. In a family gathering of a larger size, in which men and

sometimes, alcoholic beverages, and light refreshments, such as nuts, bread, and grilled meat. Activity begins at four or five in the afternoon, and, should a card party be in session, can remain open into the early hours of the morning. The rooms and garden are illuminated with lanterns, and at times an official or officer will loan a battery-operated radio for entertainment. Aside from gambling, however, the principle diversion is conversation, the men seating themselves in little groups according to their preferences. The conversationalists usually depart for their homes between nine and ten o'clock in the evening, one of the servants often accompanying them through the darkened streets with a lantern. Although not nominally members, persons of the aristocratic Kurdish class occasionally appear in the club, sitting by themselves or with some official of their acquaintance. It has been related how Sayyid Ahmad and Karim Agha were visitors in the course of an evening, but such appearances are by no means common, nor do the aristocrats indulge in gambling. As has been said, the officials and officers, unless they are Kurds, do not visit the houses of chieftains. No woman is ever seen in the club.

Aside from the month of Ramadan, during which men assume the appearance of piety, the chief entertainments of the higher officials and officers are drinking and gambling. The drinking-party has been described in a previous section, and is usually associated with a game of cards.

of cards. The game itself is unvarying, as well as its particular form, poker of the type called "five-card stud" in America, one card dealt downward to the player and the other four up. The usual amount of an individual wager is 50 fils (about $0.14), and, in a party of eight players, a typical "pot" contains as much as two dinars ($5.60). Inasmuch as the salary of any official or officer is not large, it follows that an unskillful person can lose money he can ill afford.[1] The gambling debt is becoming a feature of life for the official class in Iraq. Most of the players, however, are familiar with each other, and it need not be supposed that the Arabs, however new it may be to them, are unskilled in the subtleties of card-games. The games are held either in the nadi or in the home of the qaimmaqam, and others attend not solely to play, but to drink and to hold conversation. In addition, the officers play a form of "bingo" for small stakes in their mess, and one or two of them often arrange a cock fight, either of a pair of roosters or of chikaw, the mountain partridge, on which there is heavy betting.

The official class, the upper stratum in the second system, differs significantly from its parallel in the

[1] The salary of a typical mudir, the administrative official of a nahiya, the smallest unit, is about twenty dinars ($56.00 per month and 240 dinars ($672.00) per year. This is about the same income as that of the merchant Fatah-Ullah, mentioned above. The mudir, however, is given free quarters and other allowances, and receives an increase in pay every three years until he reaches the rank of a qaimmaqam. It can be seen how such an official feels that he cannot immediately afford marriage.

The use of alcoholic beverages,
gambling, and the eating of pork (as well as certain other 262
"unclean" animals) are specifically prohibited in the Quran. [525]
The chieftains and commoners, more as a matter of taste [273]
than of piety, infrequently break the first two of these [183]
demands. The government elite, as has been noticed, finds
its chief diversion in them. No one in the three groups,
including the several Christians among the officials, ever
eats pork. There was a peculiar tale current in the town [173
of a Kurdish tribe "somewhere in the mountains" who eat
the flesh of swine, but it is probably fabulous, like the
bears who carry off women as mates or the numerous accounts
of buried treasure. The Nestorians, however, hunt the wild
boar and eat it. Blasphemy, as a matter of cursing, is 771
an everyday affair, but in all the groups of the town it
was impossible to find anyone who challenged religion.
Some of the better educated officials and teachers, to be
sure, exhibited views which might be termed "liberal," but
none was a serious unbeliever. There is perhaps a reason [212]
for this, the almost religious regard for all written or
printed material, so common in the Middle East. A teacher,
confronted by the Quran on one hand and an atheist pamphlet
on the other, is convinced that in some way both are true,
because both are printed, and can either be reconciled or
exist, equally valid, side by side.

The Muslim religious calendar is lunar, dated from 805
the flight of the Prophet from Mecca in 622 A.D., and con-
sists of twelve months. Because it is based on the rotation
of the moon about the earth, rather than that of the earth

4: Hansen E-5 (1957) 1961 MA11: Rural MA11

584 The initiative came from the young man himself. After a sister had left to be married, the son of the house, a 26 year old primary school teacher who naturally lived at home, began to conduct low-toned conversations with "my father's wife" (his stepmother), and with his sister my interpreter. These talks did not take place during the day, so to say openly, but in the evenings after many members of the family had gone to their rest. Confidential whispering went on between the two women and him as to whether they knew a suitable young girl in the homes they visited and whether they would not start negotiating with the mother of such a person. His savings, which he had put by penny by penny, were in the postoffice (not in the bank) and now amounted to a suitable bride price. I was told that the sum amounted to 500 Dinars, equivalent to £500. The reason why, in addition to his sister, he applied to his stepmother[35] rather than to his own mother was, I was told, because the younger wife of his father was better looking, a better conversationalist, and less old-fashioned than his own parent. The prospective bride was chosen from among the older pupils at the Goizha School for Girls where my interpreter was a teacher. As both the young man and the girl belonged to one of the better families in Sulaimani, they had never had anything to do with each other. Once, swathed in her *abā*, the girl had come to deliver a message at her teacher's home, and was told that the young man who had just left was her teacher's brother. This was all the contact the two had had. The girl was described as "very polite". This can be construed as meaning that her appearance was agreeable, her manners pleasing, and that she was well brought up and domestically capable. The families were unrelated to each other.

[454] [585]

As I was away on a trip with my interpreter, I unfortunately missed the first two conversations between the women of the young man's family and the girl's mother, but I learned that the young man's stepmother, accompanied by a female acquaintance of established position, esteemed alike for the wealth of her progeny and her worldly possessions, paid an introductory call on the mother of the young girl on Wednesday, 28th August (1957), and a second visit on Friday, 30th August. At the third visit in the girl's home, both my interpreter and I were present. On this occasion four women of the young man's family negotiated with the sole representative of the girl's family, her mother. The talks took place in the home's guest reception room, which lay at the side of the entrance hall and was entered without passing through the family rooms grouped around a wooded courtyard. No refreshments were offered, not even ice water, which stressed that the talks at that stage were not binding in any way. Whilst all this went on we were seated on a very high-legged, uncomfortable sofa and equally uncomfortable chairs in an otherwise bare room. A cousin of the girl concerned entered the room, but the object of the negotiations put in no appearance[36].

Two matters were discussed at the third meeting: the one was the character of the customary information collected by the girl's family about the young man's reputation, the other, the size and employment of the bride price, which, in my experience, was debated at this stage and not postponed until the drawing up of the marriage contract by the men. Whereas the young man's family had naturally obtained as much information as possible about the girl and her family before seeking contact, it is only after the first meeting that the other side could begin to investigate a possible son-in-law's reputation in the town where, as a man, he spent the major part of his leisure and working hours. In the case I had an opportunity of following, it had apparently been said that the young man

[525]

4: Hansen E-5 (1997) 1961 MA11 Hard MA11

was rather too interested in money, an Arab game of chance, at the tea house (Sura 5, verse 91 of the Koran forbids gambling). However, these rumours were denied in strong terms by my interpreter, the young man's sister, who invoked Allah to witness the truth of her refutations. The next question to be discussed was the amount of the bride price and how much of it was to be spent upon jewellery, household utensils and so forth. This bride price and its size was paraphrastically referred to by my interpreter as "what one will do for the girl". A third subject also came up for discussion: the young man's appearance. Curiously enough, no photograph was produced although there were photographers in Sulaimani. A plan was concocted whereby the girl's mother—closely veiled of course—should drive in a car slowly past the small electrician's shop owned by the young man's father, where at the time (the summer holidays) the suitor was. In this way the girl's mother would obtain a glimpse of the person to whom she might decide to hand over her daughter.

It was the intention that the third meeting should be the final one between the women, and that the girl's mother would then place the matter before her husband to secure his sanction to the decisions reached by the women, whereafter the matter passes to the men. After that the girl's father would arrange a meeting between himself as his daughter's wali on the one hand and the young man and his father, possibly accompanied by some friends[9], on the other. In regard to similar situations in the villages, which, however, I had no opportunity to witness, I was told that at one place 120 men from a young man's village assembled to thank a girl's father for having sanctioned the union. These friends and guarantors for the young man's qualifications were served with tea by the girl's father, the prospective bridegroom having supplied the desired item, namely the enormous quantity of loaf sugar, chopped into big lumps, used on such occasions. This may have been a Kurdish parallel to the engagement meal of the men of the two families that, according to Granqvist[9], is partaken by the Palestinian Arabs.

Incidentally, after this third and final meeting of women, my interpreter declared that it would be fitting if some time elapsed before the meeting between the men took place, as it did not look well for the young man's family to evince too great an eagerness after the marriage had been arranged. My return to Denmark stopped me from following the matter on the spot, but a letter from Malfia brought me further news. She wrote: "*Please you asked me about my brothers wife. She is not the same girl which we wish you were in their house because we did'nt agree with the family, so we took another girl from the best Kurdish family. Her father is Sheikh Mahmood's cousin which you met his son Baba Ali*". From this letter it appears that it is possible for the young man's family to break off marriage negotiations at a relatively late phase: it also seems from the words "*we took ....*" that it was not the young man himself, but the family, in the first instance its female members, which changed the prospective bride. No mention is made of the girl's appearance or qualifications; the most important factor in the urban milieu apparently is to become related to a family of good repute and high social position.

To sum up the question of marriage negotiations in urban circles, it can be said that the bride need not be sought within the family. The father's brother's daughter marriage appeared to be practised by the village aristocracy. Marriage was a matter of family policy, weight being attached to the social prominence of the family with which a marriage alliance is sought. The women of the young man's